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**Introduced by Senator Romero**

February 15, 2005

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An act to add Section 2602 to the Penal Code, relating to prisoners.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SB 239, as introduced, Romero. Media access to prisoners.

Existing law grants certain rights to inmates in state prisons. Existing regulation allows media representatives access to state prisons with prior approval, and allows random interviews with inmates.

This bill would make findings and declarations regarding the importance of allowing the media to have access to inmates.

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: no. State-mandated local program: no.

*The people of the State of California do enact as follows:*

- 1     SECTION 1. Section 2602 is added to the Penal Code, to  
2     read:  
3     2602. The Legislature finds and declares all of the following:  
4     (a) Free exchange of information from behind prison walls  
5     benefits the public and fosters a safe and efficient prison system.  
6     (b) The Department of Corrections has historically permitted  
7     media access to state prisoners without endangering the safety of  
8     the prisons or the public.  
9     (c) Members of the news media should be permitted to  
10    interview state prisoners unless that access would pose an  
11    immediate and direct threat to the security of the institution or the  
12    safety of members of the public.

- 1     (d) There is no legitimate reason for a blanket ban on media
- 2     interviews with specified prisoners.

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